

What's Up Doc?
**How to get what you want from a
psychiatric consultation**

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- What can go wrong
- Why it matters
- Why it's so hard
- How to make a doctor listen
- What you should expect
- How to build a relationship

- Unvoiced agendas
 - Most patients had 5 or more agenda items
 - Doctors expect less than 3 agenda items
 - In one study, only 11% of patients voiced everything they were worried about
- Most common items addressed by the physician
 - symptoms
 - requests for diagnosis and prescriptions

- **Most common unvoiced agendas**
 - worries about possible diagnoses and what the future holds
 - patient's ideas of what is wrong
 - side effects of treatment
 - not wanting a prescription

- **Patient information unknown to the doctor**
 - patient does not mention relevant facts about medical history
 - doctor unaware of patient's views of medicines or anxieties about treatment
 - doctor has inaccurate perception of what the patient wants
 - doctor is unaware of patient's use of alternative or over-the-counter medications
 - doctor is unaware that patient has changed the dose or patient is confused about dosage

- **Doctor information unknown to the patient**
 - patient does not understand drug action
 - patient unaware of the correct dose
 - patient wants information but doctor does not know this or think patient will not understand

- **Conflicting information given**
 - patient confused about conflicting advice or has other sources of information
- **Disagreement about attribution of side effects**
 - disagreements or misunderstandings about what kind of side effects are present

- **Failure of communication**
 - patient does not understand, remember, or agree with diagnosis
 - patient does not understand treatment decision
- **Relationship factors**
 - patient assumes prescription was necessary merely because it was written
 - doctor prescribes and patient takes medicine just for the sake of the relationship

- **Better adherence to treatment**
- **More accurate diagnosis and treatment**
- **Less stress and illness for the caretaker**
- **More efficient use of everybody's time**
- **Reduced costs and more satisfaction for everyone**

- The voice of medicine (The Disease)
 - medical terminology
 - objective descriptions of physical symptoms
 - classification schemes into a reductionist biomedical model
- The voice of patients (The Illness)
 - nontechnical
 - subjective experience
 - context in the patient's personal and social life

- Imbalance in knowledge about medications
- Doctors always appear to be very busy and there are always other people waiting
- Doctors have more power in this setting than patients. Patients feel their voice is not important.

- Have the right length of appointment
- Specificity
- Brevity
- Assertiveness
- Present data in an organized way that a doctor is conditioned to hear
- Have the relevant information available

- Identification of patient and sources of information
- Chief complaint
- History of present illness
- Past history
- Family history
- Social history
- General medical history

- Appearance and attitude
- Motor activity
- Mood and affect
- Thought and speech
- Orientation
- Memory
- Judgment and Insight

- Your relationship to patient
- Precipitating event?
- History of symptoms and treatment
 - Time line!
- Allergies
- Current medications and dosages
- Any other physicians or consultants

- Case formulation
- Plan for treatment
- Explanation about medication
- How to monitor the medication

- Brand and generic name. Is there a difference?
- What is it for?
- What is the dosage? Will it change? What do you do if you miss a dose or if you take too much?
- What are the possible side effects?
- How likely are the side effects?
- What should be done if they arise?

- Are there any drug interactions? Food, OTC, alcohol?
- How long does it take for the medication to work?
- How will you know if it working?
- How long will it be given?
- Follow-up and laboratory work?
- If it doesn't work, what then?
- Outcome without medication?

- Monitoring
 - What changes should you look for?
 - Will these changes effect judgment, memory, mood, motor abilities, sleep, diet, energy, interests, relationships

- Know what you are talking about
- Be responsible
- Be assertive and tactful
- Provide documents that help with paperwork
- Try to establish continuity with doctors
- Show appreciation

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